



Troubleshooting

The center of the pile is dry.

This usually means there is not enough water. Moistening material while turning the pile.

The compost is damp & warm in the middle but the outside is dry.

The compost pile is too small. Collect more material (green & brown) and mix the new material with the existing pile. You need at least one cubic yard (3' x 3' x 3') to get the proper results.



The compost pile is damp and sweet smelling, but it will not heat up.

This problem usually means that there is a lack of nitrogen. The solution is to add more green material such as fresh grass clippings, fruits or vegetables.

There are flies around and in my compost pile.

Most of the flies in and around a compost pile are fruit flies, which are generally harmless. If there are house flies around your bin then most likely you have added meat or other rancid food materials to your pile. Cover the food with a thin layer of soil, grass, or leaves. Avoid adding meat or dairy products to your compost pile.



Troubleshooting

It is taking a lot longer to make compost than I thought it would.

Your pile can be too dry, not the right mixture of green and brown material, or there is not enough air. You will want to add water if it is too dry, add more green material, and turn more frequently. Another good source to keep your compost material aerated is to add worms. Worms are a great source of animal life that is welcomed in your compost pile.

To have a good compost pile, remember to not put the following materials in your bin.

OILS
MEAT
BONES
PET WASTE
CRABGRASS



To learn even more about composting attend one of the City of Chandler's Backyard Composting Workshops. The workshops are held throughout the year and are free to residents. For more information about the next workshop, call Solid Waste Services at 480-782-3510.



BACKYARD COMPOSTING



CITY OF CHANDLER SOLID WASTE SERVICES



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What is Compost?

Compost is a soil conditioner. Composting is a process of planned and managed decomposition that helps to return organic food waste and yard waste back into a rich organic soil.

Approximately 34% of the solid waste generated by a Chandler resident is yard waste. This includes mostly grass, yard, and tree trimmings. Composting is a useful way for residents to reduce this type of waste from going to the landfill. Compost also improves soil aeration, helps to retain water and nutrients, which in turn saves water.



Making Good Compost

A properly constructed compost pile represents an efficient biological and ecological system. It involves a wide variety of insects that surface in response to changes in the nutritional and environmental conditions of the pile.

Providing adequate sources of carbon (brown material) and nitrogen (green material) is important since these elements are food for the microorganisms. Microorganisms are needed in a compost pile to help with the decomposition.



Different Methods

Composting can be very simple with very little effort. Even if mistakes are made you can still end up with good compost for your soil. The simple process, explained here, will give you compost in about 2 to 6 months depending on frequently the pile is turned and if adequate moisture levels are maintained.



Getting Started

Composting is simple and requires very little space in your backyard. Below is a list of what is needed to get started:

- Small area in your backyard to set up the compost site.
- Compost container - upon request, Solid Waste Services will provide a free composter or you can purchase a composter at a home and garden store.
- Shovel, spading fork or rake - (tools you use for turning and rotating your composting material.
- Sprinkling can, sprayer nozzle, and water hose - used for keeping the composting material moist.
- Pruners for chopping green material, anvil pruners for chopping wood material, chipper (optional, but helpful to breakdown large yard waste)



Getting Started

- Place a layer of leaves or woody material in the bottom of the container. This will help add beneficial bacteria to the pile.
 - Add a layer of grass clippings; cover clippings with a thin layer of soil or composted material.
 - As you add materials to your composter over time, alternate layers of brown and green materials.
 - Use a shovel, spading fork, or rake to turn and rotate your composting mixture.
 - Periodically add brown & green materials.
 - Check the composting material when mixing to be sure it is moist and warm.
 - If it appears to be dry or cool, add water.
 - Mix pile at least once a week.
- Compost is done when dark brown, crumbly, cool, and ingredients are no longer recognizable.



Troubleshooting

Odors are coming from my pile.

There are several reasons why this could be happening.

1. The pile is too wet. In this case add fresh dry material and turn to mix thoroughly.
2. Too much green material in your pile can cause odors. Add more brown dry material and mix thoroughly. A ready source of brown material is shredded newspaper or junk mail.
3. Insufficient air in your pile is also another factor in odors. Just turn the pile or bin and mix the compost materials thoroughly.
4. Sometimes the material in the pile becomes too compact. Loosen the compost by mixing or turning.